BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER

DAVID SLINEY ARAÚJO

THE SLINGERS RETURN

MARVEL

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Years ago, Miles Warren, one of Peter Parker's college professors, stole a sample of Peter's genetic material and used it to create a perfect clone of **SPIDER-MAN**. With all of Peter's memories, the clone fled. Created, not born, and without an identity of his own, he gave himself a new name and made his own way in the world as **BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER!**

After the destruction of Las Vegas, Ben Reilly's adopted home, during **SECRET EMPIRE**, his focus has shifted from crimefighting to helping the city rebuild.

A casino owner and ally of Ben's, **CASSANDRA MERCURY**, has been allowing those affected by the attack stay in her casino. Her efforts have been interrupted, however, by the seemingly resurrected **HORNET!**

As he is formerly a member of **THE SLINGERS**, the Hornet's return drew the attention of his old teammate, **RICOCHET**, who has partnered with the Scarlet Spider to stop him. Together, they tracked Hornet and discovered that he is now in league with Cassandra's brother – and rival casino owner – **SILAS THORNE.**

But when Ricochet and Spidey tried to confront Hornet and his new benefactor, the former hero summoned a dangerous interdimensional monster to devour them whole!

YOU'RE IN TOWN FOR FIVE MINUTES AND ALREADY YOU'RE BUSTING MY CHOPS? MISTY--

DAD, YOU'RE A *CRIMINAL MASTERMIND!* HOW CAN YOU BE--?

WAS, HONEY. I'M DONE. MYSTERIO IS DEAD, AND MAY HE ROT IN HELL.

GOD KNOWS I'VE DONE IT BEFORE.

I MEAN, NOW I'M NOT EVEN GOOD ENOUGH FOR SPIDER-MAN! DEADPOOL KEEPS BEATING ME.

DEADPOOL! I MEAN, WHO'S NEXT? SQUIRREL GIRL? NO, MISTY, IT'S--

JOHNNY!

WHAT WAS THAT? A WOMAN'S VOICE?

FROM OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR.

WE HAVE A VISITOR.

BUT WE WON'T FOR LONG.

MY GOD! MISTY, WHAT'S...?

HUNH.

NO ONE HERE. BUT WE ***BOTH*** HEARD SOMEONE.

WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION: ***WHO*** WAS HERE...

"...AND WHERE DID THEY GO?"

DUSK?!

I SENSED YOU WERE IN TROUBLE.

YA THINK?!

BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT? IT'S CALLED A *FHTAGN.*

IT'S A ***TRULY*** JUDGMENTAL CREATURE. IT FEEDS PURELY ON EVIL...

...AND NOTICE WHO IT'S GOING AFTER. NOT RICOCHET OVER THERE, NO.

IT JUST WANTS *YOU,* SCARLET.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

MAYBE BECAUSE... LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS HARD NOW...

...MAYBE BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ***BAD GUY*** HERE.

RICOCHET? ARE YOU HEARING THIS? HAVE YOU PROCESSED IT YET?

YOU'RE ALLIED WITH THE ***WRONG SIDE.***

FACE IT, SPIDER. YOU HAVE NOTHING IN YOUR ARSENAL THAT CAN SLOW THE BEAST.

YOU'RE RIGHT...

THWIP

...BUT MAYBE *YOU* DO.

SLOT KING

YOU STUPID--!

FLATTERY WILL GET YOU NOWHERE.

NOW LET'S SEE WHERE THAT GAUNTLET CONTROL IS.

AH.

THERE WE GO.

ZZZZZKTTT

THE THING LETS OUT A SCREECH THAT SOUNDS LIKE A MILLION DAMNED SOULS WRITHING IN AGONY.

THE SOUND DOESN'T BOTHER ME AS MUCH AS I ***KNOW*** IT SHOULD, BUT IT ALSO BEGS THE QUESTION--

WHERE'S ITS *FACE?*

CRAP. ONE OF THE OLDEST RULES IN THE BOOK--

DON'T ASK A QUESTION YOU *REALLY* DON'T WANT THE ANSWER TO.

WE'RE OUT OF HERE.

WAIT! WE CAN HE--

--LP!

DAMMIT, DUSK!

THAT WASN'T OUR FIGHT.

...

WHY ARE YOUR BOOTS UP HERE?

THE SPIDER TRIED TO WEB ME TO THE ROOF TO MAKE ME STAY PUT.

OH GOOD, THE WEBBING EVAPORATED.

AND IT BLOODY WELL *IS* OUR FIGHT! WHAT IF THAT THING GETS FULLY OUT INTO OUR WORLD?

YOU ***REALLY*** WANT THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER DECIDING WHO LIVES AND WHO DIES?!

GET US BACK IN THERE! NOW!

IT'S BETWEEN A FAKE HORNET AND A FAKE SPIDER-MAN! AND BESIDES, YOU COULD BE KI--

NOW!

OHHHH FINE.

LET... GO OF...

...ME!

SORRY, HORNET. YOU DON'T GET ME THE SAME WAY TWICE.

AND BY THE WAY--

ZZZZT

THANKS FOR THE GEM.

NO!

YES.

KRUNK

YOU IDIOT!

THAT WAS THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO CLOSE THE GATEWAY!

NOW THE BEAST ITSELF IS HOLDING IT OPEN...

...AND IT'S GOING TO COME THROUGH!

OH.

OKAY, WELL THAT'S MY BAD, THEN.

FORTUNATELY, YOU'VE GOT THE ONLY WEAPON THAT ***WORKS*** AGAINST IT! YOU GONNA DO ANYTHING?

OR ARE YOU JUST GOING TO LET THE WORLD GET TORN APART?!

GOD, I HATE YOU.

BEFORE I WAS INDIFFERENT, BUT NOW I ***REALLY*** HATE YOU.

ZZZZZZT

THIS TIME WHEN IT SCREAMS I CAN'T EVEN THINK OF A WAY TO DESCRIBE THE SOUND.

I FEEL LIKE I'M IN THE EYE OF A TORNADO, LOOKING AT CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION ALL AROUND.

OHHHHH, CRAP...

ZZZZZT

MOVE!

HEY! OVER HERE!

BRING IT ON.

COME ON, I DARE YOU.

ATTA-BOY.

DUSK!

SHE... DOESN'T SEEM WORRIED.

I'M NOT.

HOLY--!

WHERE DID SHE GO?

HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW? IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S MUCH OF A PLANNER.

HI.

WHOA!

WHAT THE--?!

YOU'RE ALIVE!

WELL, THAT'S DEBATABLE.

WHERE'S THE CREATURE?

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MARIANA TRENCH.

IT ACTUALLY SEEMED QUITE HAPPY THERE.

THAT'S... THAT'S AMAZING! THAT'S...

WHERE'S THE SPIDER?

HE'S RIGHT OVER TH--

UH, BOY.

THIS IS FUN.

SHELTER FOR PEOPLE IN NEED HERE

IT CAN BE.

YOU KNOW, YOU REMIND ME OF A LITTLE GIRL I NEVER ACTUALLY KNEW.

IS YOUR NAME GRACIE, BY ANY CHANCE?

NO.

WHY?

THAT WAS HER NAME-- THE LITTLE GIRL'S.

THE PREGNANCY WAS HARD. AFTER, THE MOTHER COULDN'T GIVE BIRTH ANYMORE.

CRIB DEATH.

AND GRACIE DIED OF CRIB DEATH AT SIX WEEKS.

WAS SHE YOUR DAUGHTER?

NO. NO, SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF...

SOMEBODY ELSE.

SOMEBODY WHO DIED A LONG TIME AGO.

SAY, THIS MACHINE ISN'T BUILT FOR TWO! WANT TO GET OUTTA HERE?

SURE!

HERE WE ARE.

WHOAAA!

HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE HERE?!

JUST ME.

ARE YOU HUNGRY?

VERY.

THAT'S A SMALL REFRIGERATOR LOADED WITH FOOD. AVOID THE LIQUOR BUT EAT ANYTHING ELSE.

OKAY!

MRS. LADY? YOU CAN CALL ME GRACIE IF YOU WANT.

IF IT WOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY.

YOU KNOW WHAT?

THAT WOULD MAKE ME VERY HAPPY.

ME, TOO.

YOU'RE MY BEST MEN. NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY--

FORBIDDEN CITY

JUST IN CASE THE HORNET CAN'T HANDLE THE SCARLET SPIDER, I'M GOING TO NEED THE FOUR OF YOU TO--

WAAAAM

WHAT THE--?!

WUUNK

OH, NO...

OH, YES.

NOW WE TALK.

I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU.

YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE CASSANDRA MERCURY ALONE.

SHE'S A GOOD PERSON.

YOU POOR, PATHETIC DUPE. YOU DON'T KNOW HER AS I DO.

I KNOW YOU WERE WILLING TO STEAL FOOD FROM ***CHILDREN*** JUST TO HURT HER.

I'D STEAL THE CHILDREN ***THEMSELVES*** JUST TO HURT HER AND HER PERPETUALLY DYING DAUGHTER, ABBY.

AND I AM GOING TO TAKE HER DOWN.

NO, YOU'RE NOT. IT'S OVER, THORNE.

OVER? MY DEAR BOY, IT'S BARELY ***BEGUN.***

AND WHO'S GOING TO STOP ME? ONE OF YOU PURE-SOULED SUPER HEROES? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.

SO... ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY?

NO. I GUESS NOT.

KRUUNCH

UNHH...

GOING SOMEWHERE?

WUNNNK

E...ENOUGH...

ENOUGH?

MY DEAR BOY, IT'S BARELY *BEGUN.*

I AM SO *SICK* OF OFFICIOUS JERKS LIKE YOU, GOING ALL THE WAY BACK TO A CERTAIN NEWSPAPER EDITOR.

YOU THINK NO ONE ELSE'S LIFE MATTERS EXCEPT YOUR OWN.

POWWWW

THAT HEROES DON'T MATTER... THAT CHILDREN DON'T MATTER... HELPLESS CHILDREN...

YOU THINK YOU GET TO DECIDE WHO LIVES AND DIES.

YOU THINK YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

KRUNK

WELL, YOU'RE WRONG. YOU ARE SO FREAKING WRONG!

WHAM

I TELL *YOU* WHAT TO DO. AND I AM TELLING YOU THAT YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE CASSANDRA MERCURY ALONE.

AND IF YOU DON'T...THEN THIS, RIGHT HERE...

WINK

...WILL SEEM...

WUNK WUNK

...LIKE...

WUNK WUNK WUNK WUNK

...THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

DOWN THERE! THORNE'S THAT WAY!

WE HAVE TO STOP SCARLET SPIDER BEFORE HE GETS TO THORNE!

WHY?! I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT'S...

I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME!

SILAS, OKAY? MY NAME'S SILAS!

WAIT, LIKE THORNE?

YES, BUT NO RELATION.

NOW COME ON! WE NEED TO FIND HIM BEFORE IT'S--

"--TOO LATE."

STILL THINK... SCARLET SPIDER... IS A GOOD GUY...?

YESTERDAY WAS A GOOD DAY.

I HAVE A LEAD ON SOMEONE WHO MIGHT CURE ABBY...

...I SAVED CASSANDRA'S FOOD TRUCKS.

...AND I DELIVERED A PRETTY CLEAR MESSAGE TO THORNE ABOUT LEAVING HER ALONE.

SO EVERYTHING IS GOING PRETTY WELL.

FOR ONCE, BEN REILLY, LIFE IS LOOKING PRETTY GOOD.

NO!

II

WH-WHAT IS THIS?!

HOW... HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?! *WHY?!*

NO!

KNOCK KNOCK

PETER! WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG IN THERE?!

77

KNOCK KNOCK

IT'S... UH... ANOTHER *INJURY* FOR THE *METS!*

YEAH, WELL...THE ATHLETICS ARE MOVING TO VEGAS. GOT THE INSIDE TRACK ON THAT.

SO SWITCH TEAMS.

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G-GOOD ADVICE.

DEATH! WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

DEATH! MARLO! *WHATEVER* YOU CALL YOURSELF!

GET YOUR SKELETAL BACKSIDE DOWN HERE! WE NEED TO TALK! *RIGHT NOW!*

NOTHING. GREAT.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN. FIRST, THE PERSONA OF DEATH SHOWS UP AND TELLS ME MY SOUL NEEDS TO BE REPAIRED. THEN SHE FIXES MY FACE.

THEN A QUARTER OF IT GOES BACK TO WHAT IT WAS, AND WHEN I ASK FOR HELP, NO RESPONSE.

SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO TRUST A COSMIC ENTITY THAT...

YOU'RE LECTURING ABOUT TRUST?

REALLY?

I'M TELLING YOU RIGHT NOW, I'M NOT GOING TO DO A *THING* TO HELP THE METS.

THE LAST TIME I GOT INVOLVED IN BASEBALL, IT WAS--

Y'KNOW, FOR SOMEONE WHO *DOESN'T MAKE JOKES*, YOU SURE LIKE TO CRACK WISE!

CARE TO TELL ME *WHAT HAPPENED TO MY FACE?!*

WHAT DO YOU *THINK* HAPPENED?

IT STARTED DETERIORATING AGAIN!

IF YOU KNOW, WHY ARE YOU ASKING?

IS THIS A *GAME* TO YOU?

WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE ME, ALREADY?!

AS YOU WISH.

NOOOO!

YOU REALLY NEED TO MAKE DECISIONS AS TO HOW YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE.

WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?

THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE TO ASK AT ALL SPEAKS VOLUMES.

THORNE.

THORNE? YOU MEAN THE GUY I BEAT THE CRAP OUT O--

OH.

RIGHT. OH.

YOU SAY YOU WANT TO RESTORE YOUR SOUL. YOU CAN ONLY DO THAT BY DOING THE RIGHT THING.

HE WAS STEALING FOOD FROM HOMELESS PEOPLE!

YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME THAT'S NOT EVIL?

I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE, AS WELL.

AND YOUR FACE IS GOING TO REFLECT IT UNTIL YOU CHANGE.

THIS OPPORTUNITY IS A GIFT, BEN. EVEN IF YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO REALIZE IT.

...

SO ARE YOU GONNA FIX MY FACE, ORRR...?

NO. YOU ARE. IF YOU CAN.

IF I CAN BE GOOD. UNSELFISH. MERCIFUL. *HEROIC.*

CORRECT.

GREAT.

GOOD LUCK TO YOU, BEN.

WHAT?

WAIT.

I GOTTA ASK...WHEN DID YOU LAST GET INVOLVED IN BASEBALL?

CUBS. WORLD SERIES.

I *KNEW* IT!

HAD TO. LOST A BET TO MY SISTER.

YOUR SISTER?

LIFE.

WHO'RE YOU TALKING TO?

77

HMM?

OH.

JUST MYSELF.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?!

THE SCARS YOU HAD WHEN YOU ARRIVED-- THEY'RE ***BACK.***

I ASSUMED YOU'D BEEN IN SOME ACCIDENT, BUT THEN IT WAS FINE, AND NOW--

IT'S A RARE ***SKIN CONDITION.*** IT COMES AND GOES.

ANYTHING FROM STRESS TO POLLUTION CAN TRIGGER IT.

REALLY.

ARE YOU SURE SOME SUPER VILLAIN DIDN'T DO IT TO YOU--

SCARLET SPIDER?

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, MR. THORNE?

St. Rose Dominican Hospital
EMERGENCY
Outpatient Entrance
Rehabilitation
Medical Entrance
Hospit

KF

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

NO, REALLY, WE'RE CONCERNED.

YOU AND THE SCARLET SPIDER BROKE INTO MY PLACE...FOUGHT THE HORNET... AND THEN YOUR PAL, HE...

...HE DID THIS TO ME. THE GUY YOU HELPED AGAINST THE HORNET...

I...I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS THAT VIOLENT. I DIDN'T--

S'ALL RIGHT, RICOCHET... I...FORGIVE YOU...

JUST ASK ONE THING...

PAYBACK.

I SWEAR I WILL.

I SWEAR IT.

THAAANK YOUUU...

WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING ABOUT?

YOUR SINCERITY.

IT'S SO CHARMING TO WATCH YOU MAKE EMPTY PROMISES.

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IT'S NOT EMPTY. I'LL MAKE THIS RIGHT.

MORE POSTURING FROM A SO-CALLED SUPER HERO.

YOU DON'T GET TO JUDGE ME! YOU DON'T KNOW ME! AND I SURE AS HELL DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU!

ALL I KNOW IS THAT YOU TOLD US YOUR NAME IS "SILAS," AND YOU'RE WEARING MY DEAD FRIEND'S COSTUME!

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT IT!

8

THE BLACK MARVEL.

THAT...THAT CAN'T...

THE BLACK MARVEL'S *DEAD.*

I HEAR THAT PHRASE A LOT.

I'VE EVEN HEARD IT ABOUT MYSELF.

YOU'D BE AMAZED, THE FORCES THAT EXIST THAT CAN PUT THE LIE TO IT.

COME.

1

3

WHERE?

"TO THE THEATER."

T THEATER

LIVE MAGIC

GAME OVER

GREGGY

BLACK PANTHER

GENERATION 4 ONE

PART 1.

Showgame Bar

WELL, THIS IS NICE-ISH.

A SIDE BUSINESS OF MR. THORNE'S. HASN'T HAD MUCH ACTIVITY IN RECENT DAYS.

OKAY, FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: WE HAVE TO FIND DUSK.

HELLO, JOHNATHON.

AHHHH!

JEEZ!

DON'T *DO* THAT, CASSIE!

SO, HALF THE SLINGERS TOGETHER AGAIN. PLUS YOU REMEMBER I HAVE A NAME. THAT'S NICE.

WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

IT MEANS--!

FORGET IT.

I SAID *FORGET IT.*

CASSIE--

IT APPEARS FROM BOTH HIS ACTIONS AND THE WAY THAT MONSTER WENT AFTER THORNE THAT THE SCARLET SPIDER IS EVIL. SO, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT HIM?

I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

BEING IN CHARGE, BEING THE LEADER, WAS NEVER REALLY MY THING.

NO. YOU'RE RIGHT.

THAT'S MY JOB.

PRODIGY?!

RITCHIE! *FINALLY.*

I'M IN COSTUME, JOHNATHON. CALL ME PRODIGY.

AND WHY AREN'T YOU IN COSTUME?

BECAUSE I JUST CAME FROM THE HOSPITAL, THAT'S WHY.

FIGURED MY CIVVIES WERE A BETTER CHOICE.

SO WHAT'S GOING ON? I TRAILED THE SCARLET SPIDER LIKE YOU TOLD ME.

BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY I'M SUPPOSED TO TRUST THIS HORNET GUY LIKE YOU CLAIMED...

GOOD TO SEE YOU, SILAS.

YOU TOO, PRODIGY.

SO YOU KNOW HIS REAL NAME? WHO HE REALLY IS?!

YES.

HOW?!

THE BLACK MARVEL TOLD ME.

HE WAS THE ONE WHO PUT BOTH OF US TOGETHER WITH THORNE.

AND NOW...

...WE HAVE TO TAKE DOWN THE SCARLET SPIDER. BEFORE HE KILLS SOMEONE.

SORRY.
NO CHOICE

URGE

ARRRHHHH!

"PETER?"

PETER, WHAT'S WRONG?

NOTHING. I...

NOTHING.

SCARLET SPIDER? WHO THE HELL IS THAT?

WELL, THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.

HE FOUGHT SLATE A WHILE BACK IN THE CASINO.

BUT MORE RECENTLY HE SAVED MY FOOD TRUCKS.

AND WHEN YOU FIRST GOT HERE, YOU MOVED SO QUICKLY WHEN I HAD A GUN POINTED AT YOU, I COULDN'T EVEN SEE IT.

FAST REFLEXES DON'T PROVE ANYTHING.

THAT'S TRUE. THAT'S VERY TRUE.

HAH!

SON OF A--!

DAMNED SPIDER-SENSE AND REFLEXES.

VERY NICE.

WANT TO WEB ME UP?

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

PETER...IS THAT EVEN REALLY YOUR NAME?

I OBSERVE. I PUT THINGS TOGETHER. I MAKE OBSERVATIONS AND DISCERN THE WORLD.

VERY SHERLOCKIAN.

I DON'T KNOW WHY A SUPER HERO SHOWED UP HERE OFFERING TO CURE MY DAUGHTER.

BUT YOUR STATUS GOES A LONG WAY TOWARD IMPROVING YOUR STANDING WITH ME.

AS LONG AS YOU CURE MY DAUGHTER.

OTHERWISE I'LL STILL GUT YOU LIKE A FISH.

HAVE A GOOD DAY, PETER.

WHAT'S GOING ON, DIVA?

GOING ON? NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN, SLATE.

AWWW, CRAP, HERE WE GO AGAIN.

YOU'RE PLAYING WITH SOMEBODY. I CAN TELL.

PLAYING?

GOT SOME DIRT ON SOMEBODY AND YOU'RE WONDERING WHETHER TO SPILL IT.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE REFERRING TO, SLATE.

IF I DID, I'D...

I WASN'T EXPECTING ANYBODY.

KNOCK KNOCK

DIVA, IT AIN'T COMING FROM THE FRONT DOOR.

THEN WHERE...?

KNOCK KNOCK

THE CLOSET.

KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
OH. NOW WHAT THE HELL--?!

UNFFFF!

LET ME... GO!

WE WILL DO SO IN A FEW MOMENTS.

UNTIL THEN, I SUGGEST YOU DON'T--

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
SIGH...
PING
MMMMMMFF
CALMLY.
WHITE SKIN. BULLETPROOF. A PRODUCT OF THE DIOGENES INITIATIVE, I ASSUME?
HOW DID YOU--?
QUIET. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A MESSAGE.
AND I SUGGEST YOU GIVE IT TO THE SCARLET SPIDER WORD FOR WORD.

KRAAASH!

YOU AGAIN?!

WELL, THIS TIME YOUR TIMING SUCKS.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

SOME GIRL, I THINK. CONTROLLED SHADOWS. SHE TRANSPORTED CASSANDRA.

AND THERE WAS SOMEONE WITH HER. BIG GUY. BULLET-PROOF.

SHE GIVE A NAME?

WE WEREN'T FORMALLY INTRODUCED.

THEY LEFT A MESSAGE FOR YOU.

FOR ME?

YEAH. DID YOU BEAT THORNE NEARLY TO DEATH?

PRETTY MUCH.

THEY WANT YOU TO CONFESS TO IT. GO TO THE POLICE AND TURN YOURSELF IN.

YOU GOT 24 HOURS.

OTHERWISE, THEY *KILL CASSANDRA.*

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

I'VE GOT NO CHOICE, TERRY. I HAVE TO SELL SOME OF THE PROPERTIES THAT ARE STILL INTACT TO HELP REPAIR THE ONES THAT WERE SEVERELY DAMAGED.*

*BACK IN SECRET EMPIRE, TRUE BELIEVERS! --DEV

AND YOU WANT TO SELL A VETERANS' CENTER TO PUT IN A PARKING GARAGE?!

LOOK, IT'S NOT *UP TO ME,* TERRY.

AND WHERE ARE MY GUYS SUPPOSED TO GO?

TERRY, I'VE KEPT YOUR RENT DOWN FOR AS LONG AS I COULD. I'VE DONE EVERYTHING TO HELP.

NOW I'M AFRAID YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

#@%&!

TERRY?

WE'RE SCREWED. WE'RE COMPLETELY SCREWED.

MAYBE YOU CAN FIND SOMEWHERE BETTER.

WITH WHAT? THE COPIOUS AMOUNT OF MONEY WE HAVE COMING IN?

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO, KAINE.

WE'LL KEEP THIS PLACE OPEN UNTIL THE NEW LANDLORD TEARS IT DOWN, AND THEN WE PACK UP.

UNLESS *YOU'VE* GOT ENOUGH MONEY TO FIND US SOMEWHERE NEW.

NO.

BUT I MAY KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES.

HIS NAME'S BEN. HIS BEST FRIEND OWNS A CASINO...

...AND HE OWES ME BIG-TIME.

OWES YOU FOR WHAT?

NOT KILLING HIM.

INCREDIBLE. THE *SLINGERS*, THE SO-CALLED GOOD GUYS, HAVE KIDNAPPED CASSANDRA AND NOW THEY'RE TRYING TO BLACKMAIL ME INTO...

WELL, INTO DOING THE RIGHT THING, I GUESS. SO, MAYBE THAT'S STILL GOOD-GUY STATUS.

STILL, IT'S LIKE THEY'RE OPERATING IN A MORAL VACUUM. THEN AGAIN, SO HAVE I.

AND NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM. JESUS... MAYBE I REALLY AM A BAD GUY... WHICH MAKES THEM THE GOOD GUYS.

SO ARE YOU GONNA GET OFF YOUR BUTT AND DO SOMETHING? I MEAN, HONESTLY, I DON'T CARE THAT YOU BEAT UP THORNE.

WHAT I CARE ABOUT IS CASSANDRA'S DAUGHTER IS WAITING FOR HER MOM TO COME HOME.

I DON'T WANT TO BE THE ONE TO TELL HER THAT HER MOTHER PREDECEASED HER.

SO DO THE RIGHT THING. ASSUMING YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT IS.

SLATE'S RIGHT. NOT CARING ABOUT WHAT I DID DOESN'T MEAN I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS. IF I DON'T HAVE A MORAL CODE, I'M NOTHING.

FINE. I'LL GO.

FIVE MINUTES LATER...

THEY REALLY NEED TO HAVE WINDOWS THAT OPEN PUT IN HERE.

NOW WHERE THE HELL IS--?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! WHY'D YOU CHANGE COSTUM--?

OH, CRIPES, ARE YOU ANOTHER OF THOSE SPIDER-WANNABES LIKE THE ONES WHO SHOWED UP A WHILE BACK? DO I HAVE TO BEAT YOU UP, TOO?

I'M THE SCARLET SPIDER.

NO, YOU'RE NOT! THE SCARLET SPIDER JUST LEFT FOR THE POLICE STATION!

WHY?

SOME LUNATICS KIDNAPPED CASSANDRA MERCURY, AND THEY WANT HIM TO--

WAIT... SHE'S BEEN *KIDNAPPED*? MY GOD, THIS IS PERFECT...

PERFECT?!

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT HAVING A WEALTHY WOMAN GRATEFUL TO ME WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SAVING SOMEPLACE THAT'S REALLY WORTHWHILE

SORRY. DOESN'T MATTER. SHE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED. THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING. WE'VE GOT TO GET HER BACK.

THAT'S WHAT THE SPIDER IS TRYING TO--

NO, WE NEED SOMETHING MORE DIRECT. AND I HAVE A THOUGHT ON THAT.

IS THIS WHAT I SHOULD DO?

POLICE DEPT. LAS VEGAS

IS THIS THE PATH I SHOULD TAKE?

CONFESS WHAT I DID?

I MEAN, I DID BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF HIM. NO MATTER WHAT REASON I HAD...AND IT WAS A DAMNED GOOD REASON...

I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT. AS MY NOW-PARTLY-MESSED-UP FACE ATTESTS.

AND PART OF ME JUST WANTS TO BOLT. I DON'T OWE CASSANDRA ANYTHING. NOT REALLY.

I COULD PUT VEGAS IN MY REARVIEW AND NOT BLINK. THEY WOULDN'T REALLY KILL HER.

MAYBE.

AND WHAT ABOUT AUNT JUNE?

I MEAN YEAH, OKAY...NOT REALLY MY AUNT.

BUT STILL...

WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO HER?

WE'RE GOING OUT. WAKE UP.

WE'RE GOING OUT.

THAT'S RIGHT. COME ALONG, JUNE.

WILL IT BE EXCITING?

OH YES. VERY.

K-CHUD

SCREW IT. IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

SO IF I SIT IN JAIL FOR TEN YEARS WHILE MY FACE AND SOUL HEAL, THAT'S NOT SUCH A BAD THING, RI--?

HEY.

WHOA!

CRIPES, KAINE! WHAT THE HELL?!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS, BUT I'M HERE TO TURN MYSELF IN FOR BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF SOMEBODY!

AND TO SAVE CASSANDRA MERCURY, RIGHT?

YES!

SLATE WAS ABLE TO ACCESS HER COMPUTER. HE KNOWS HER LOG-IN CODES. AND THE COMPUTER FOUND HER PHONE.

WHAT? THEY... THEY DIDN'T DESTROY IT?

I SUSPECT SHE HID IT IN HER UNDERWEAR OR SOMETHING. AND APPARENTLY HER KIDNAPPERS WERE TOO GENTLEMANLY TO STRIP-SEARCH HER.

WHERE IS SHE?

AT A THEATER, WHICH I SUSPECT IS OWNED BY THIS THORNE FELLOW.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

FOR STARTERS, IT'S CALLED THE THORNE THEATER.

YYYYEAH, THAT'S A GOOD TIP.

YOU REALIZE IT COULD BE A TRAP? THEY MIGHT KNOW ABOUT THE CELL PHONE AND BE USING IT AS BAIT TO LURE ME IN.

THAT OCCURRED TO ME. BUT THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING TWO OF US.

SO YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME?

SHE'S A KIDNAPPED SINGLE MOTHER OF A DYING CHILD.

NO MATTER WHAT ELSE I'VE GOT GOING ON, THAT'S THE FIRST, BIGGEST CONCERN.

I'M NEEDED, SO I HELP.

OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE WHOLE "HERO" THING?

JUST NEED TO BE REMINDED OF IT NOW AND THEN. THANKS.

LET'S GO.

SOOO YOU'RE JUST GONNA LEAVE ME HANGING?

THAT'S THE PLAN.

I WONDER IF SCARLET SPIDER'LL COME HERE?

THEATER

I'M NOT SURE. PART OF ME HOPES HE'LL DO THE RIGHT THING...

...AND PART OF ME HOPES HE'LL FOLLOW THIS PHONE SO I CAN ASK HIM WHY HE'S THIS WAY.

PEOPLE RARELY KNOW WHY THEY'RE EVIL...

BAAAM

FREEZE!

THAT'S VERY RUDE, JOHNNY. SHOUTING AT ME LIKE THAT.

HOLY GOD...

WHY DON'T YOU BRING ME TO YOUR ASSOCIATES?

BL... BLACK MARVEL?

INDEED. DIDN'T PRODIGY SAY HE SPOKE WITH ME?

YEAH, BUT I... BUT HE... BUT...

THE SLINGERS, JOHNNY. IT'S IMPORTANT.

IF YOU LET ME GO NOW, I SWEAR I WILL NOT HAVE YOU KILLED.

OTHERWISE, NO PROMISES.

SHUT UP.

I'M JUST THINKING OF Y--

WAAK

I SAID SHUT UP!

THAT WASN'T NECESSARY.

KEEP OUT OF THIS OR--

APOLOGIZE OR I'LL PUSH YOU IN.

IN? INTO WHAT?

INTO THAT.

UH... SORRY?

THAT'S ENOUGH. SEPARATE CORNERS, EVERYBODY.

UH... PRODIGY? I, UH... I'M STILL HAVING TROUBLE BELIEVING ALL THIS.

GREETINGS, PRODIGY. DUSK. HORNET.

DUSK...IS SOMETHING WRONG?

CASSIE! WHAT'S GOING O--

HI THERE.

SO...

BUTT KICKINGS ALL AROUND. WHO'S FIRST IN LINE?

'CAUSE I GOT ALL DAY.

OH, I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D BE FIRST.

'CAUSE I'VE SEEN ALL YOUR WEAPONRY. I KNOW WHAT TO AVOID, WHAT TO USE AGAINST YOU.

SO WE'RE GONNA HAVE SOME FUN DANCING.

PRODIGY! RICOCHET! TAKE HIM DOWN!

GET OUT OF HERE.

WHAT THE--?

WHO ARE...?

SNP

SNP

DON'T WORRY. I'M INVISIBLE. NOW JUST...

SLINGERS, LOOK ALIVE! THERE'S *ANOTHER* SCARLET SPIDER HERE!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE INVISIBLE. HOW DID HE SEE YOU?

NOTHING HUMAN CAN. WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION-- *WHAT IS HE?*

TAKE HIM.

HE'S TOOK.

UNFFFF!

OUTTA THE WAY, KID! I'M NOT SCREWING AROUND ANYM--

OOOOFFF!

DAMMIT NOT QUITE SO MANEUVERABLE WHEN I'M IN MIDAIR.

SENSED HIM COMING, BUT COULDN'T DODGE

GOOD JOB!

KNOW THIS MOVE, SCARLET? IT'S A FULL NELSON. BANNED IN WRESTLING BECAUSE, WITH PROPER STRENGTH, IT CAN BREAK YOUR NECK.

I'VE... HEARD OF IT...

SURRENDER. LET US BIND YOU AND DELIVER YOU TO THE POLICE.

GO TO... HELL...

I SAID GET *OUT* OF HERE!

PRODIGY! YOU MAY NOT HAVE THE *RIGHT ONE!*

WE MIGHT HAVE TO BRING IN BOTH OF THEM!

NOT THE RIGHT ONE? WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* AB--

WAAAM

HE GOT DISTRACTED EASED UP SLIGHTLY AND THAT--

KRUUUNCH

--WAS ALL I NEEDED.

UNFFFFF!

DUSK! A LITTLE HELP HERE!

YES. YES, I THINK HELP *IS* NEEDED HERE.

WHAT TH--?!

THUD

DUSK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

YOU'RE NOT THE BLACK MARVEL.

YOU'RE AN IMPOSTOR-- JUST LIKE THE NEW HORNET, EXCEPT WORSE.

YOU DON'T HAVE A *SOUL.*

DON'T... DON'T BE *RIDICULOUS!*

OF COURSE I HAVE A--

NO, YOU DON'T.

TAKES SOMEONE WHO DIED TO TELL.

SO WHAT *ARE* YOU EXACTLY?

ARRRHHH!

HANDS OFF, DUSK...

THWWIIIIP

OH, NOW WHAT?!

HAH!

BRAAKK

YOU LITTLE--!

SNAKT

SPIKES?! AND...

YOUR ARM'S METAL?!? WHAT THE HELL, DUDE? WHO *ARE* YOU?!

TOLD YOU. MY NAME'S SILAS.

SILAS WHAT?!

SILAS BURR, OKAY? HAPPY?

EXCEPT IN THE OLD DAYS, THEY USED TO CALL ME...

...CYBER.

HOW THE HELL DID THAT PRODIGY GUY KNOW ABOUT THE DIOGENES INITIATIVE?

NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT THAT, IT WAS TOP SECRET.

IT'S CLOSED DOWN AND EVERYBODY ASSOCIATED WITH IT IS DEAD.

I MEAN, YEAH, CASSANDRA KNOWS, BUT SHE WOULDN'T SPREAD IT AROUND.

WHAT IF...

...WHAT IF IT'S *NOT* SHUT DOWN?

WHAT IF THAT GUY IS PART OF IT? IS HELPING TO REORGANIZE IT?

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN HE'S GOTTA GO. I JUST HAVE TO END HIM.

WHICH I REALLY SHOULD DO ANYWAY SINCE HE KIDNAPPED THE DIVA.

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE IT'D BE SMARTER TO KEEP HIM AROUND. TORTURE HIM TO FIND OUT WHAT HE KNOWS, AND THEN KILL HIM.

CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT NOW. GOTTA MAKE A CALL.

VOL

CICCONE? THIS IS SLATE.

SLATE?! I TOLD YOU NEVER TO CALL ME WHEN I'M ON THE JOB--AND WHY THE HELL ARE YOU CALLING ME ON A POLICE CHANNEL?!

BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO SEND SOME COPS TO THE THORNE THEATER, TO CLEAN UP THE MESS....THAT I'M ABOUT TO MAKE.

THE BLACK MARVEL IS BACK. FIGURES. I MEAN I SHOULD BE SURPRISED...

...BUT I'M THE POSTER BOY FOR RESURRECTION. SO WHATEVER. MAYBE I SHOULD ASK HIM HOW PRINCE IS.

CYBER IS DEAD. ALL THE RECORDS SHOW--

CAN'T TRUST THE RECORDS, PRODIGY. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.

HE'S NOT ALIVE IN THE SAME SENSE THAT THE BLACK MARVEL IS. CYBER AT LEAST HAS A SOUL...

...BLACKENED AND SCARRED AS IT MAY BE.

BUT THE MARVEL IS A SOULLESS ABOMINATION.

THAT'S IT. NOW YOU'VE HURT MY FEELINGS.

I MAY HAVE TO HURT YOURS IN RETURN.

KRAAAK

HE'S A DEMON.

A *WHAT?*

A DEMON. FROM HELL. ONLY SUCH A CREATURE OF DARKNESS COULD BREAK OUT OF MY HOLD.

YOU'RE *KIDDING,* RIGHT?

IT'S TRUE, SPIDER. IN BEING REBORN, I CONFINED MYSELF TO THE FORM OF THE BLACK MARVEL. I HAVE ALL HIS KNOWLEDGE, HIS ABILITIES...

...BUT IT WAS HIS *UNFINISHED BUSINESS* THAT INTRIGUED ME MOST--TO CONTINUE TEACHING *THE SLINGERS.*

THERE IS SO MUCH MORE FOR YOU TO LEARN, AND I CAN IMPART THAT WISDOM TO YOU.

WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY TEACH US-?

YOU ACT AS IF THERE'S SUCH A HUGE DIVIDE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. THERE REALLY ISN'T.

THE FOUR OF YOU ARE FRACTURED. ALWAYS HAVE BEEN. YOU'VE NEVER TRULY BEEN A TEAM, ALL WORKING FOR THE *COMMON GOOD.* YOUR PERSONALITIES OVERWHELM YOUR MISSIONS. IT IS THE GREATEST WEAKNESS OF YOU MORTALS. YOU LACK *FOCUS.*

EVEN THE SCARLET SPIDER--A HERO, A *GOOD GUY,* WHO NEARLY BEAT A HELPLESS MAN TO DEATH.*

CRIPES. DOES *EVERYBODY* KNOW ABOUT THAT?

*BACK IN *BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER #10,* CLONEHEADS! --EDITOR

AND THEN THERE'S CYBER. A VILLAIN THROUGH AND THROUGH. A DEAD ONE, FOR THAT MATTER.

BUT IN HELL, HE WANTED A SECOND CHANCE. HE WANTED TO TRY AND DO GOOD.

ABSOLUTELY.

SO I BROUGHT HIM BACK UP HERE. AND I THINK HE WAS DOING A REASONABLY GOOD JOB, DON'T YOU?

NO. I DON'T.

I LET MY PERCEPTIONS BE COLORED BECAUSE I WAS SO DETERMINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE BLACK MARVEL HAD MIRACULOUSLY RETURNED.

I DIDN'T ASK HOW. I JUST TOOK IT ON FAITH.

BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FAITH, WOULD YOU?

I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EVERYTHING.

AND I'LL BE HAPPY TO SHARE ALL THAT KNOWLEDGE WITH YOU.

YOU'LL SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

I'LL PULL BACK THE CURTAIN AND SHOW YOU HOW THE UNIVERSE WORKS.

HOW DOES THAT SOUND TO YOU?

LET ME THINK.

HMM.

NO THANKS.

WAAAM

OOOOOOFFF!

YOU SONS OF--!

SHUT UP, CYBER.

YOU'RE NOT WORTHY OF WEARING THAT UNIFORM. IT BELONGED TO A GUY WHO WAS WORTH A HUNDRED OF YOU.

SO YOUR UNIFORM RESISTS LASER BEAMS. IMPRESSIVE.

TELL ME, HOW DOES IT DO...

...AGAINST *ADAMANTIUM TALONS?*

YEAH! NOT SO GOOD!

ARRHHH!

SKRAAAAAATCH

THAT'S IT, HORNET! SHOW HIM THE--

EH? WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

RRRRRRRR

BRAKADOOM

TIME TO MOVE!

I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

THERE THEY ARE! JUST LIKE SLATE SAID!

YOU TWO! *FREEZE!*

YEAH. RIGHT.

WHAT THE HELL?

LV MPD

HEY, DIVA! READY TO GO HOME?

SLATE?! HOW THE HELL DID YOU GET THE POLICE TO LET YOU DRIVE THAT THING?!

WORRY ABOUT THAT *AFTER* YOU DEAL WITH THESE GOONS. I'M GETTING CASSANDRA TO SAFETY.

YOU HEARD THE MAN!

LET'S MOVE!

DAMMIT!
WE'VE GOT TO FIND THEM!
SPIDERS, YOU HEAD NORTH ON THE STREET. SLINGERS, WE'LL HEAD SOUTH.
GOOD PLAN.
I'VE GOT A BETTER ONE.
HOW ABOUT WE FIND BLACK MARVEL, AND YOU GUYS JUST WORRY ABOUT *KICKING HORNET'S ASS?!*
WORKS FOR ME.

OOOOFFF!

NOT YOU AGAIN!

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ME...

ROYAL CASINO

KRASH

...WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR YOU, "HORNET"!

UNFFFFF!

WHAM

YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET THAT, YOU--

OH JEEZ, SPARE US VILLAIN DIALOGUE 101, WOULDJA?

IT'S OVER, CYBER!

YOU GOT *THAT* RIGHT!

BYE-BYE, RICOCHET!

UH-OH.

WHEEWWW. GOOD TIMING, DUSK.

THANK YOU.

NOW IT'S TIME TO...

AW, NUTS!

DON'T WORRY. I'M ON HIM...

DUSK! ANY SIGN?

NO.

HE'S GONE.

DAMMIT.

LET'S HOPE THE SCARLET SPIDERS DO BETTER.

INTERSECTION COMING UP!

DAMN. YOU HANG RIGHT, I'LL GO STRAIGHT.

AND IF HE WENT LEFT?

THEN WE'RE SCREWED. NOW MOVE!

WISH I HAD A SPIDER-TRACER I COULD HAVE THROWN ON HIM.

I'VE GOTTA WHIP UP SOME OF THOSE TO USE IN THE FUT--

WHOAAA! WHAT THE HELL--?!

JUST USING SOME OLD TRICKS FROM BACK HOME. DID YOU LIKE IT?

HERE'S ANOTHER.

WHAAM

UH-OH.

UNFFFFFF!

WHUDD

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENING, DO YOU? NO IDEA OF THE HORROR THAT'S COMING TO LAS VEGAS?

OH GOD, NOT *ANOTHER* CIRQUE DU SOLEIL SHOW...

I WOULD EXPLAIN IT TO YOU, BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE IT.

SPLAASH

HI. THIS... IS *GOD.*

WH--?!

I NEED YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME, *RIGHT NOW.*

YOU ASSUME I COME FROM HELL, AND YES, I'VE *BEEN* THERE.

BUT THE *DIOGENES INITIATIVE* IS WHAT LIBERATED ME FROM IT. I SERVE *THEM* NOW, WITH PLEASURE.

AND THEY HAVE SUCH PLANS FOR THIS CITY, SCARLET. THEY MEAN TO *REMAKE* LAS VEGAS IN THEIR OWN IMAGE. TO HEAL THE WOUNDS *CAPTAIN AMERICA* INFLICTED.

A SHAME YOU WON'T BE AROUND TO SEE IT.

ANY LAST WORDS, SCARLET SPIDER? ANY FINAL QUIPS YOU WANT TO--

--SAY?

WHAT'S... WHAT'S HAPPENING?! I DON'T--!

FSSSSSS

...ET NE NOS INDUCAS IN TENTATIONEM...

STOP! STOPPPPP!

...ET IN HORA MORTIS NOSTRAE. AMEN!

HE MADE IT INTO HOLY WATER! BLESSED THE WHOLE FOUNTAIN! I'LL KILL HIM FOR TH--

GOING SOMEWHERE?

NO!

YOU CAN'T LEAVE YET! YOU NEED TO HAVE THE WHOLE LAS VEGAS EXPERIENCE!

COME ON! BREATHE IT IN!

ATTABOY!

WHOA, SEEMS YOU HAVE DEEP PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES! YOU'RE CLEARLY FALLING APART!

HOW ABOUT THAT. JUST LIKE IN *BUFFY* AND *SUPERNATURAL*.

YOU'VE DONE WELL, MY SON. *PAX VOBISCUM*.

WELL, WELL. LOOK WHO FINALLY CAUGHT UP.

WHAT HAPPENED TO CYBER?

HE GOT AWAY.

OF COURSE HE DID.

SO WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW? YOU GOING TO KIDNAP CASSANDRA AND THREATEN TO KILL HER AGAIN UNLESS I--

WE WERE NEVER GOING TO KILL HER. LOOK, WE'RE STILL NOT THRILLED WITH THE WAY THAT YOU ALMOST BATTERED THAT MAN TO DEATH...

...BUT CONSIDERING WHAT'S HAPPENED, I DON'T THINK WE'RE REALLY IN A POSITION TO PASS JUDGMENT.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I KNOW WHAT I DID WAS WRONG. IT'S...

...COMPLICATED.

WE'RE GOING TO HOLD YOU TO THAT.

IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN, I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT.

SCARLET... I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.

YEAH? WHAT?

MYSTERIO.

MERCURY TOWERS

SO HOW WAS YOUR DAY, MOMMY?

OH, JUST A STANDARD DAY. NOTHING UNUSUAL.

YOU LOOK TIRED. GET SOME SLEEP.

NIGHT, MOMMY.

NIGHT, SWEETHEART.

=SIIIIIGH=

HI.

HOLY--!

SORRY. INVISIBILITY SHIELD.

NO KIDDING!

JUST... GIVE ME A MOMENT, OKAY?

SO THERE'S TWO OF YOU, HUH?

YEAH.

SLATE TOLD ME YOU FIGURED OUT WHERE I WAS. MUCH THANKS FOR THAT, AND FOR RESCUING ME.

IT WAS NO PROBLEM.

STILL, I OWE YOU.

GOOD.

"GOOD"?

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS IN DEEP FINANCIAL TROUBLE.

OH. OF COURSE. A "FRIEND."

NO, IT REALLY *IS* A FRIEND. IF IT WERE ME, I WOULD SAY SO. I'LL TELL YOU THE ENTIRE STORY...

"...AND THEN YOU DO WHAT YOU WANT."

VETERANS CENTER

HEY.

HEY.

GOT SOME NEWS.

OH, JOY. BECAUSE THE NEWS I'VE GOTTEN SO FAR JUST CAN'T GET ANY--

--BETTER?

BANK US

Pay Veterans Center Las Vegas

Cheque No.

Branch No

OH...MY GOD.

OH MY GOD. IS THIS...

...IS THIS REAL?

SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO RENT A BETTER PLACE. HELL, PROBABLY ENOUGH TO BUY ONE OUTRIGHT.

THIS IS *MIRACULOUS*! HOW DID YOU--?

I CAN'T MAKE OUT THE SIGNATURE. CASS... SOMETHING?

SHE'S RICH AND I HAVE A WAY WITH PEOPLE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

YOU'VE SAVED US! YOU SAVED US, KAINE!

YEAH, WELL, I DO THAT FROM TIME TO T--

HOME, SLATE.

YOU GOT IT, DIVA.

23

THUMP THUMP

SIR! OPEN UP!

I SWEAR, I HEARD SCREAMING, AND THEN SOME KIND OF BIG BANG!

I HOPE HE DIDN'T RUIN THE ROOM!

THERE WE GO!

KLIN

LVPD! WHAT'S GOING ON IN--?!

HOLY...

IS THAT... *BRUCE CAMPITTI*?

IT WAS. A LITTLE...HELP HERE...

WHO DID THIS TO YOU?!

A...HIPPO. AND IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME...

...HE WENT THAT WAY.

WHOAAAA...

VETERANS CENTER

LAS VEGAS

IS THAT HOW MUCH I *THINK* IT IS? NO DECIMALS IN THERE?

NOPE. WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO GET. I'M HEADING OUT TO THE BANK TO DEPOSIT IT.

WHERE'D YOU GET IT?

FROM ME. AND I GOT IT FROM... FRIENDS.

TERRY, YOU GONNA INTRODUCE US?

THIS IS MY BROTHER, KERRY. KERRY, THIS IS KAINE.

IT'S A PLEASURE.

TERRY...AND KERRY? YOUR PARENTS HAVE QUITE A SENSE OF HUMOR.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE, MAN?

I DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT.

KERRY! YOU KNOW BETTER! FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!

SORRY, SORRY! IT'S JUST, ALL THE TIMES YOU TOLD ME ABOUT HIM, YOU NEVER MENTIONED IT.

"ALL THE TIMES"? YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT ME?

WHAT'S SHE BEEN SAYING, KERRY?

SHUT UP. EVERYBODY STOP TALKING ABOUT ME.

OKAY, FINE. YOU A VET ALSO, KERRY?

NOPE. I'M THE BACKUP QUARTERBACK FOR THE VEGAS GOLD CHIPS.

THE GOLD CHIPS? I HEAR THEY'RE TEARING UP THE LEAGUE.

WE ARE, NO THANKS TO ME. BRUCE CAMPITTI IS THE MAN. IN FACT, WE'RE PLAYING THIS AFTERNOON IF YOU'D LIKE TICKETS...

NEVER BEEN MUCH FOR ATTENDING GAMES. TOO MUCH NOISE.

PHONE. HOLD ON.

THIS IS KERRY.

WHAT? HE...HE WHAT?!

HOLY...

IS HE OKAY?

YEAH, OKAY, COACH, ON THE WAY OVER RIGHT NOW.

BRUCE WAS ATTACKED! SOMETHING... SOMEONE... BROKE HIS ARM!

I'M STARTING TODAY!

THAT'S TERRIFIC...I GUESS? I MEAN, IT'S HORRIBLE, BUT...

COME WITH ME. I NEED SOMEBODY IN THE STANDS ROOTING FOR ME. WE'LL SWING BY THE BANK, DEPOSIT THE CHECK AND AND GO STRAIGHT TO THE STADIUM.

ALL RIGHT. KAINE, INVITE'S STILL OPEN.

NO, IT'S OKAY. I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS TO DO.

LEMME TAKE A RAIN CHECK.

IT'S THE DESERT. IT NEVER RAINS.

KIND OF THE POINT.

STAY COOL, KEEP YOUR HEAD. YOU'LL BE FINE.

I WILL. THANKS.

LET'S ROLL, SIS!

GOOD THING PETER GAVE ME A HANDFUL OF SPIDER TRACERS.

OF COURSE. I DON'T HAVE SPIDER-SENSE TO FOLLOW THEM. BUT THE ELECTRONIC LISTENING DEVICE IN MY EAR WILL DO JUST FINE.

IF SOMEONE'S TARGETING KERRY'S TEAMMATES, *HE* MAY BE NEXT.

SO IF I FOLLOW THEM AND HE ATTACKS, THE SCARLET SPIDER WILL BE RIGHT THERE TO PROTECT HER.

HIM. I MEANT HIM. PROTECT *HIM*.

DAMMIT. THIS GIRL KISSES ME ONCE AND SUDDENLY I CAN'T FOCUS. I WONDER IF BEN EVER HAS THIS PROBLEM.

KNOK KNOK KNOK

YEAH? CAN I HELP YOU?

MR. BECK?

THAT'S YOU, RIGHT? QUENTIN BECK? HI. I'M FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.

I'M HERE TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS BECAUSE IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING YOU'RE A NEW RESIDENT.

BEEN HERE *SIX MONTHS*, ACTUALLY...

WHAT'S WITH THE SKI MASK? IT'S 80 DEGREES OUT.

PSORIASIS. SENSITIVE TO SUNLIGHT. REALLY BAD.

CAN I COME IN?

I DON'T THINK SO, NO.

FINE.

WE'LL DO IT THE HARD WAY...

...MYSTERIO.

SPIDER-MAN.

SHOULD'VE RECOGNIZED THE VOICE, EVEN IF IT WEREN'T MUFFLED.

HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS HERE?

A SOURCE THAT TOOK AN INTEREST. SHE DECIDED TO BACK OFF AND LET ME HANDLE IT.*

HAVE A SEAT. LET'S... CHAT.

*BEN'S SOURCE WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE SLINGER DUSK! SEE **BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER #10-13**, TRUE BELIEVERS! --EDITOR

I LOVED THE TELLER'S EXPRESSION WHEN I HANDED HER THE CHECK.

YEAH, THAT WAS PERFECT. AND THAT'S IN *VEGAS*, WHERE THEY'RE USED TO MAJOR FUNDS.

SO KAINE... ARE YOU AND HE...YOU KNOW...

WHAT?

YOU *KNOW.*

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

SO THAT'S A "YES," THEN.

SHUT UP.

LAS VEGAS STADIUM

THERE IT IS. ISN'T IT GORGEOUS? ONLY SUSTAINED SOME MINOR DAMAGE FROM THE ATTACK.

THERE'S A SPECIAL ENTRANCE FOR PLAYERS. I GET OFF HERE.

HEY, MR. WRIGHT! AND YOU HAVE COMPANY, I SEE...

MY *SISTER*, BENNY.

THAT'S MY NAME, TOO!

VERY FUNNY. WANNA OPEN THE GATE?

WHO IS *THAT?*

HE'S ONE OF THE *QUARTERBACKS!* CAN WE HAVE AN AUTOGRAPH?!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SIS?

IT'LL MAKE THEIR DAY.

OH MY GODDDDDD!

CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN.

MY BABY BROTHER. UNBELIEVA--

WHAT THE HELL?!

HOLY CRAP!

MOVE! MOVE! EVERYBODY MOVE!

OUTTA THE WAY!

THOOM THOOM THOOM

TERRY! GET OUTTA HERE!

STUPID SEATBELT BUCKLE! I CAN'T OPEN--

UNNFFF!

KRAAASH

UNHHH...

WHOAAA!

I WAS JUST GONNA BREAK YOUR ARM. ALL I WAS HIRED T'DO, REALLY.

BUT YOU'RE GIVIN' ME GRIEF. SO I THINK I'LL BREAK...

...YOUR WHOLE FREAKING BODY!

THWIP

HUH?

AHHHHH!

WAAAAAAMM

THE HIPPO, ISN'T IT?

USED TO BE A ZOO HIPPO NAMED MRS. FLUFFY LUMPKINS UNTIL THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY EVOLVED YOU INTO... WHATEVER YOU ARE.

ESPN MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

SPIDER-MAN! IN A STUPID NEW COSTUME!

HE'S *BUSINESS!*

WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST IN KERRY WRIGHT?

BUT *YOU'RE* PLEASURE!

I'M FLATTERED.

DON'T BE! BECAUSE NEXT YOU'RE GONNA BE *FLATTENED!*

KRUUUNK

HEY! GET OFF ME!

WAM

WAM WAM WAM WAM

MAKE ME.

WELL, SINCE YOU'RE *ASKIN'* FOR IT!

UH-OH.

OOOFF!

WHERE'S WRIGHT?! WHERE'S--!

NNGH...

CAR'S TOAST, SIS. HEAD FOR THE EXIT AND HELP AS MANY PEOPLE OUT AS YOU CAN!

OH, NO YA DON'T!

JUST WAIT *THERE*, SPIDER-MAN!

HAVE T'TAKE CARE OF *BUSINESS* FIRST!

KRAAASH!

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN, BECK? COME ON-- SAVE US SOME TIME.

MEANWHILE...

I DON'T HAVE A PLAN! HOW MANY MORE TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?!

THEN WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN LAS VEGAS?

EVERYONE'S GOT TO BE SOMEWHERE!

DON'T YOU GET IT? I'M RETIRED! I'M DONE!

I'M TIRED OF GETTING BEATEN! YOU BEAT ME! DAREDEVIL BEAT ME!

DEADPOOL RAN ME OVER IN YOUR *DUNE BUGGY*, FOR GOD'S SAKE. OH, AND BY THE WAY, *I DIED!*

I THOUGHT YOU FAKED YOUR DEATH--

NO! I DIED! WENT TO HELL! THE WHOLE *NINE YARDS!*

AND I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

I ACTUALLY DIED, AND NOW I JUST WANT TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE! *THAT'S ALL I WANT!*

BUT I SUPPOSE YOU COULD NEVER *UNDERSTAND* THAT!

BECK...

...YOU'D BE AMAZED WHAT I COULD UNDERSTAND.

NO! DON'T! GET BACK!

DON'T HURT ME! I BEG YOU!

OH, BE QUIET.

THWIIIP

DON'T MAKE ME REGRET NOT DRAGGING YOU TO THE POLICE.

SCRRRP!

STAY ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW, BECK. OR YOU'RE GONNA *REGRET IT.*

BANG

RUN! GET OUTTA HERE!
NO, I'M STICKING WITH--
WOULD YOU FOR ONCE LISTEN TO M--
YOU'RE GOING DOWN, WRIGHT!
WHY?! WHAT DID I EVER DO TO YOU?!
NOTHING! BUT THE GUY WHO HIRED ME, HE BET HEAVILY ON YOUR OPPONENTS!
AND HE FIGURED THEY'D WIN IF YOUR TEAM'S QUARTERBACKS WEREN'T PLAYING!
MONEY?! YOU'RE DOING THIS FOR MONEY?!
YEAH, WHAT ELSE?
HOW ABOUT THIS?
WAAAAM

OOOOFF!

OH, YOU MISERABLE, PUKING LITTLE--

AWW, NO!

KRAAASH

THWIP
THWIP
THWIP
THWIP
THWIIIP
GOTTA DO THIS FAST.
MMMMMM.
POURING IT ON NICE AND THICK FOR YOU, HIPPO, SO YOU CAN'T RIP IT OFF.
HE LOOKS PRETTY FRANTIC.
WELL, HE'S SUFFOCATING. DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO TAKE A BREATH. COUPLE OF MINUTES, HE'LL BE DEAD.
WHO HIRED YOU, HIPPO?
CARE TO TELL ME BEFORE YOU *DIE*?
MMMDOOOO.

TALK!

HE--HE ONLY EVER C-CALLED H-HIMSELF M-MARLOWE...

THANKS.

WAAAAAAM

IS HE OUT?

FOR NOW.

YOU'RE... *THE SCARLET SPIDER?* I'VE BEEN READING ABOUT YOU.

PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT, YOU'LL BE IN THE NEXT ARTICLE.

SO WHO'S MARLOWE?

NO IDEA.

BUT I'M GOING TO FIND OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED!

BEN REILLY:
THE SCARLET SPIDER

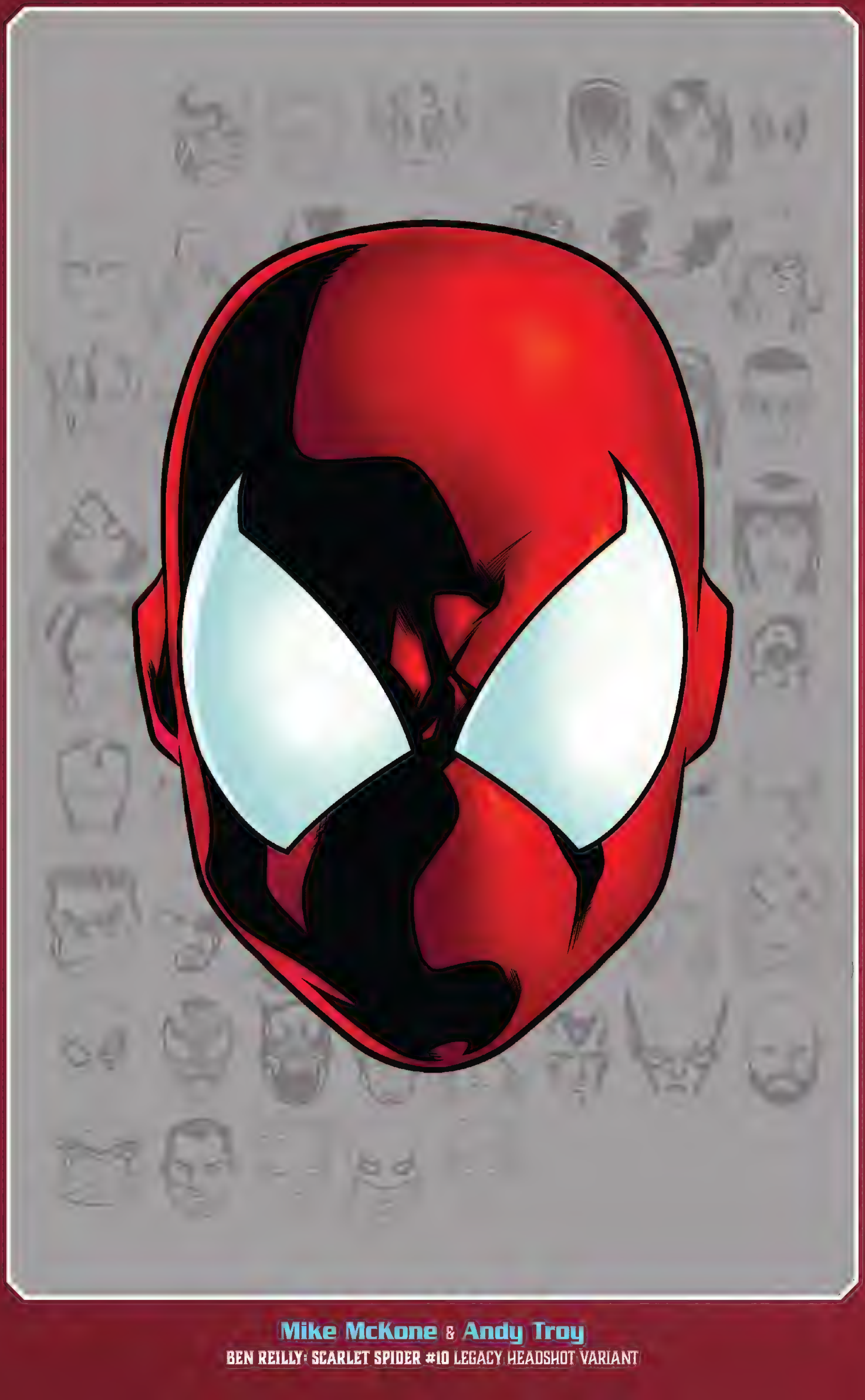
MARVEL

THE SLINGERS...
FRIEND OR FOE?!

DANMORA 17

Dan Mora & Andres Mossa

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #10 HOMAGE VARIANT



Mike McKone & Andy Troy

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #10 LEGACY HEADSHOT VARIANT

Brent Schoonover & Matthew Wilson

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #10 VARIANT

Will Sliney

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #13, PAGE 2 ART

BEN REILLY, A.K.A. THE SCARLET SPIDER,
IS A PERFECT CLONE OF THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN…

BUT WITH NONE OF PETER PARKER'S RESPONSIBILITY!

BEN MOVED WEST to carve out a new life for himself in Las Vegas, but now Peter's past is encroaching on Ben's turf in the form of the new Hornet! Who is he working for, and what will the former Slingers – Dusk, Prodigy and Ricochet – have to say about the new man under their old teammate's mask? Chances are their views might not quite line up with Ben's. If you've guessed it's all leading up to the return of the Slingers, you guessed right! But when Ben's ally and new benefactor, Cassandra Mercury, deduces his secret identity as the Scarlet Spider, will she use that knowledge against him?

COLLECTING ***BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #10-14*** –
BY PETER DAVID, WILL SLINEY, ANDRÉ LIMA ARAÚJO AND RACHELLE ROSENBERG.

T+

ZONE